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Resilience

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Songs to Help Children in Hard Times

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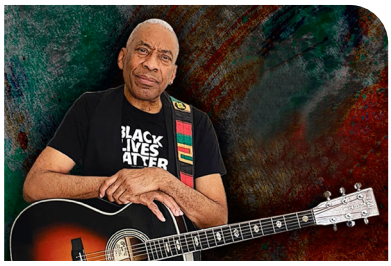
Melanie DeMore is a multitalented singer, composer, performer, choral instructor, and "vocal activist," and has been involved with a number of organizations and ongoing community actions over the last several years. Page 9.



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Songs about believing in yourself, expressing feelings, overcoming adversity, trying again and again, growing from mistakes, adapting to change, finding support, and all those things that allow us to carry on when times are tough. Page 16.

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Julieann's song teaches kids how to express their needs and find support as well as how to give gratitude and celebrate their inner strength. Page 19.

Songs to Help Children in Hard Times

by Sarah Pirtle[1], Stuart Stotts[2], and Ruth Pelham[3]

On April 24, 2024, three legendary CMN artists offered a Zoom workshop focused on the power of music to help children process challenging emotions and upsetting events. They shared songs written especially for hard times and told powerful stories about making connections through music even in devastating circumstances . . . and with skeptical audiences. Many thanks to Sarah and Ruth for transcribing and condensing the workshop for this article, which presents highlights of the songs and insights offered by the three presenters as well as thoughtful responses from other workshop participants.

What do I do when my sister is crying?
What do I do? I don't know what to say.
You take your sister in your arms and you hug her.
You take your sister in your arms and you love her.

What do I do when the whole world is crying?
What do I do? I don't know what to say.
You take the world into your heart and you love us.
You take the world into your heart and you love us.

Sarah Pirtle: What are supportive songs for young people in these challenging times? Those verses of Ruth [Pelham]'s longer song, "What Do I Do?" really help bring us into the topic. I've been in a group of people who were in grief, and after singing this song, they felt immensely comforted.

CMN formed initially from a tremendous concern for how children were affected by events in the world and how intimate connections through music support children. Songs can zoom in on what's important to talk about. Stuart says songs can help young people build capacity.

Jill Person, whose life mission was recording meaningful music as owner of A Gentle Wind, said to me once: "Kids are coming into school more upset and more vulnerable than ever before. But teachers have less time for everything including addressing emotional issues." She continued, "Yet I've seen how introducing a song—which can take three minutes—can make a difference in new understanding."

How can we in CMN offer songs that matter to young people and are singable, supportive, and sensitive? We want to engage CMN both in finding and writing singable songs that build connection and strength through singing together.

We're talking about a way of being close to children that's different from relating just as a performer. It matters that everyone's invited to sing along. As Ruth says, "It's the heart and intention you bring and who you are in relating to the children that helps the most. When we sing and write songs with children, we get to love them in the most simple way."

I want to mention CMN member Pam Felber. During the October 2023 CMN conference, Pam wrote in the chat a message that deserved a response. The conference happened at the time of a shooting in Lewiston, Maine, at a bowling alley, and Pam wrote that this was a place where her family had gone. I wrote back to her with concern then phoned her later to follow up. This started a series of conversations that created the seeds for offering this direction to CMN. I knew Stuart and Ruth would be interested, and what follows are sections of our workshop for CMN.

One time I was starting a songwriting residency in Russell, Massachusetts. When I arrived, I learned that a huge fire had recently spread in town after a railroad repair worker accidentally lit a spark. Instead of admitting it and getting help, he left the scene and let it burn. So, part of the crisis was learning about his behavior. Everyone was shook up. But they also talked about how the whole town rallied. I asked myself, what did they want to hear now? What's the honest reassurance that they wanted?

Here's the song we wrote:

> Help comes when you need it.
> Help comes when you call.
> Help comes when you're hurt.
> Help comes when you fall.
> Look around. People care. Yes, people will be there.

SELECTING AND SHARING SONGS FOR HARD TIMES

What songs can acknowledge feelings of young people in these times?

Choose an aspect of your social identity. What songs would be helpful for children with your same identity?

What kind of introduction would help bring children into the song? What might you ask them to discuss after singing?

How can aspirational songs about love and unity foster support?

What zipper songs can help children add their own thoughts?

How might Pete Seeger be engaged today in helping young people if he were alive?

I brought it to a different school, and they added a new verse:

> I will stick by you, you can count on me.
> We make a circle that is strong.
> If you are hurt, we'll listen and help.
> We make a circle that is strong.

Songs can give important reminders like that. Debbie Rubenzahl, a family counselor in Greenfield, Massachusetts, said, "Children need a nonthreatening way to talk about feelings and values. Music is an ideal vehicle. It appeals to their love of fun and at same time speaks to real-life skills."

Stuart Stotts: I've been singing with kids for many, many years all over the place. I've been incredibly lucky to get to do that. CMN members who do this work, we've all got songs to get us started. Any time you want to connect to kids, you need, I believe, to begin with a sense of belonging and relationship and caring. So, this is a little song that Tom Pease and I have used. We wrote verses to this song with kids, but basically now it's come down to the chorus, which is a zipper song.

> Come on in, come on in. Got a little room for you.
> Come on in. Come on in. Got a little room for you.
> No matter where you come from. No matter what you do.
> Come on in. Come on in. Got a little room for you.

In other verses you can say, "got a little snack for you," or "got a little song for you."

Schools are different than they were thirty-five years ago when I started doing this. You have, I think, greater needs emotionally. A sense of connection is harder to come by. I think that makes the work matter even more.

Bess Lomax had this great story about that. She felt like the songs children learn help build a sort of emotional immune system. I believe they had to put a dog down in their family. Later on, she hears the kids outside singing "Go tell Aunt Rhody the old gray goose is dead," to help them process this experience. *(Read the story in "Yeast to Make the Bread Rise," Bess Lomax Hawes's Keynote Address to CMN's 1999 National Gathering*[4]*, published in* PIO! *Fall 2022.)*

I think it's important to focus on songs that are singable together. Pete Seeger said something that I love and He said, when you watch a virtuoso, you think, wow, look what they can do. But when you sing together, you go—look what *we* can do. And that's what we're interested in.

Ruth Pelham: Our music is so incredibly needed now. It was needed when we started CMN way back in the 80s, and oh my goodness! Looking at everyone here in this online workshop —we are all bright lights. A situation that I have found myself in, given the changes that happen in the world, is that there are songs that I just love to sing from the bottom of my heart. One of them is this:

> Love is all around. Love is all around.

Then we add verses:

> The Earth is our treasure. How lucky are we?
> Love is all around.
> Home to billions of people just like you and me.
> Love is all around.

What I have found tricky these days is to sing a song like "Love is All Around" when the world is the way it is. People can look at you and say, "Are you for real? What kind of song is that? You're an idealist. Are you in touch with anything?" How do we go about singing songs like that when the world is so much more visibly bombarded? So, I would say that now is the most important time to sing these songs and to figure out how, in presenting them, we put them in a context of acknowledging the incredible challenges that we're facing and the hate in the world, and the contradictions and the static, all of that. But keep singing these songs.

Sarah: I really agree with you, Ruth. Here's what happened for me when I was listening on the car radio, and I heard the news about the shootings at the Sandy Hook School in Newtown, Connecticut. I stopped my car and tried to figure out what could I write that in any way might be helpful. Then a few weeks later, Nancy Hershatter, a longtime CMN member, actually brought many of us from CMN to perform in Newtown. It was a large gathering in the gym where the families from all the dance and music classes, like the ones that Nancy runs, were assembled. When I did this song that night, suddenly there was a hush. The families knew without my saying so that it was written for them.

> Hold hands and stick together.
> Hold hands if something shatters.
> Hold hands. We're not alone now.
> Hold hands, our hearts matter.

I bring this same song now to many situations.

Stuart: How can we prepare children to move safely through the world? This next song takes place within the context of kids talking about what safety is. My friend Peg Flandreau West was a social worker, and she developed a system thirty-some years ago called *Protective Behaviors*. There was a terrible incident that happened to a child here in Madison, and so she began listening to children about safety, trying to understand more about what safety meant to them. And out of that, she developed a system with four parts.

The first is recognizing that you have the right to feel safe, which is, if you think deeply about it, a little bit revolutionary in itself.

The second is that whether you are safe or not is something connected to your body. And she called it the *early warning signs*. What's your early warning sign?

Third thing was identifying people you know who you feel you can talk to. So, I wrote this song to reinforce these messages:

I got the right to feel safe, anytime, anyplace, anywhere, any day.
I got the right to feel safe. I got the right to feel safe.
In the pit of my stomach, right inside my heart.
A feeling gives me a warning when something scary starts.
I'm learning to pay attention when that's going on.
Well, it might mean I'm a little bit scared
or that something's really wrong. . . .

If something scary is happening and I don't like at all,
there are people that I trust who I can give a call.
I'll just keep on telling all of my trusted friends,
and I won't stop my telling till I feel safe again.
Cause I got the right to feel safe, anytime, anyplace, anywhere, any day.
I got the right to feel safe. I got the right to feel safe.

Ruth: During one residency, I just about got laughed and shamed out of the room. I was with tenth graders, and I wasn't used to working with tenth graders who are opinionated and growing adults.

I started singing some of these songs and they said to me, "How do you sing those songs? The world is not anything like you think it is." And I was in that school because they had an assignment where they were looking at the causes of ethnic violence in the world—how to understand that, how to relate to it, and what to do about it. Well, they had no interest whatsoever in writing those songs. And unfortunately, I thought at that time, *I cannot believe I have to go back*—two more sessions, and there were four classes of tenth graders! I went home and I was really done in. I thought, *How do I deal with this?*

Well, I went back the next day. And I said to them, "You can tell from my songs that I really believe in people's goodness. Do you know what it's like to live believing in people's goodness and to see what it's like in the world? Do you know how depressed I can get? Do you know how upset I get?" They had already written off the world and there was nothing to do about it. And I said to them, "The conclusions you've come up with—is that what you want your younger sisters and brothers to also grow up thinking?"

And they looked at me like, "What, are you nuts?" No, is what they answered.

I said, "Well, what do you want them to know? How about instead of writing these other songs, we write songs about what you would want your younger sisters and brothers to think about?" My gosh. It changed everything. So, we wrote these songs. And they were so into it. I acknowledged their reality, and my point is that sometimes we have to have a hard shield around us. Stay with the conflict. Stay with it. Think out of the box.

Sarah: Thank you, Ruth and thank you, Stuart. Now comes the time in the workshop where we want to give space to hear from some people who've been listening.

Nancy Schimmel: I want to talk about your song, Ruth—"What Do I Do?" I was in a classroom the day after 9-11. And that was obviously the song to sing. And I did, and I sang a few verses. Then I asked the children to put in people for another verse, and one kid said, teacher. So, we sang, "What do I do when my teacher is crying?" And your song seemed to sum up everything that we felt.

Nancy Hershatter: Stuart, I really like using your song "Darkest Days." It is one of the songs I think belongs in this list.

> Even deep in winter, the sun will rise,
> The sun will rise. The sun will rise.
> Even deep in winter the sun will rise.
> Even on the darkest days.

And then it's a zipper: Your love will grow. Birds will sing. World will turn, people will cook. So simple and so beautiful. It doesn't have to be winter. I mean, it's the winter of one's soul right now with what's going on in the world. And the song is reassuring and warm and loving.

Sarah: Pam, you're part of this team. What would you like to add?

Pam Felber: One of the songs that I think works really well is a song by Emma's Revolution called "Peace Salaam Shalom." Little, little children love to sing that song, and they'll sing it over and over and over again. It's very calming to them. And the other thing that I do is give time for gratitude at the end of every class. I call it opening up our flowers, and we name things we are thankful for. We say thank you for singing with me. Thank you for sharing the music. So, thank you three for sharing your music.

Stuart: There's so much value in the act of singing together. The experience of singing together is kind of revolutionary in our culture in which people are so isolated and rarely get to experience the power of singing. The choice of songs matters, but, you know, the very experience also matters tremendously.

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1. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/author/sarah-pirtle
2. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/author/stuart-stotts
3. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/author/ruth-pelham
4. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/yeast-to-make-the-bread-rise

Melanie DeMore: Music as Community Connector and Food for the Soul

by Lily Emerson[1]

Originally published in our Spring 2017 issue, this article is offered again to honor Melanie DeMore as the 2024 Magic Penny Award recipient.

This past summer, I was lucky enough to interview Melanie DeMore[2]*, the phenomenal keynote speaker for the recent Children's Music Network Conference in Los Gatos, California. Afterwards, I was left feeling incredibly inspired.*

If you are unfamiliar with this extraordinary person, Melanie DeMore is a multitalented singer, composer, performer, choral instructor, and "vocal activist," and has been involved with a number of organizations and ongoing community actions over the last several years. The following comprises a few connected moments from the original blog posts as well as parts of our conversation that were omitted.

Music and Connection

Melanie DeMore: I think the main thing that we need to remember is that music, again, not only is it food, it's the thing that ties everybody together and makes them equal. It is the one time when people are singing together and making music together; in that moment, they are together.

Because you have to do the rhythms together, your feet are doing something different than your hands, you're singing, you're doing all these other things, and when you get that many people together who are moving and doing all that stuff together, it is extremely powerful and it makes the group more cohesive. So it's really about community building, which is the entire premise of everything that I do musically; whether it's little kids or professional choirs, that is the entire purpose: the tightening of whatever community that is. Tightening the weave. It's just so important, especially these days. What are the things that tie us, that connect us to each other?

> **"Your job is to go and teach the song that you learned today to somebody else."**

With my little kids, I would ask them, "What do you need to feel safe? Do you know that a little kid in Syria or Iraq or Ghana needs exactly the same thing?" So that when we sing these songs, like a song I wrote called "For All the Children in the World," you're getting to sing for people who maybe don't get to sing. Your song is wrapping somebody else up, so I want them to think about that; what happens to somebody over there affects you. They're little kids, and they're like, "We get that. We understand that." It all comes back to tightening the weave of community and connection. If it doesn't do that, I ain't interested.

For nine years I conducted a children's choir. I wrote mostly all-new music, and it was important to me that the music first of all reflected what was going on in the community and in the country. I also instructed them, after every rehearsal, "Your job is to go and teach the song that you learned today to somebody else." That's really important to me.

Generally, I would write really interesting music for them that was fun to sing, but that had something that they could carry out throughout their lives. You know, that they could call up. Planting seeds in there. Giving them tools for how to walk around in the world.

Oakland Children's Choir

I had a young woman who obviously had been through a lot of really hard things, and I had written a song earlier called "I Can Do That," because to be able to do anything, somebody just has to show you. I wanted to help them come from that point of view. "Yes, I can do that. Show me," instead of, "No, I can't do that," which automatically puts you down. So I used this piece a lot, and she sent me a message on Facebook a little bit after that, and she said, "You know, I decided I was going to audition for this musical, and I got really scared, and then I remembered the song, 'I can do that, I just don't know how yet,' so I'm going to do it."

You see, if you're going to pass that knowledge along, pass on something you can use. What's the point, otherwise? Because music is so powerful, and imprints on you, if you can imprint something that people can use, that's really important. That's the most important thing. I don't want to give them empty calories.

Lily Emerson: Is that where your Sound Awareness program came from?

Sound Awareness is just a blanket. It's an umbrella term for a bunch of different classes under what I call Sound Awareness. So, for instance, under my umbrella of Sound Awareness, I developed a whole curriculum based on *American Idol*.

Because one year when I was at St Paul's [Episcopal School] in Oakland, one of the top four was a kid I'd trained for the Oakland Youth Chorus. The top four, here in Oakland! So the kids were really into it, and I thought, "Well, okay, let me just think about this," since I knew they were watching it.

The kids kept a journal, and I talked with the other teachers, because it wasn't just about the music. They had to look at demographics. They had to keep track of what was the top news story each week. We talked about different statistical things, about how over the years in *American Idol*—most people don't even realize this—most of the winners are from the South, so we talked about those kind of things. We had a whole list of vocabulary words that go along with pop culture, and one of their vocabulary words was "arbitrary," because nothing is arbitrary. Everything you see on TV is absolutely coordinated.

One year, doing this with the kids, I said, "Hey, let's look at our commercials, and see. . ." because they had to keep good track of the commercials. And they'd say, "Oh, they don't mean anything," and I'd say, "I want you to keep track of them." And so we're looking at the commercials, and I said, "What's different than when we looked at these a couple weeks ago?" And you know how sixth graders are, they'll give you 60 million different answers before they land on the one, and finally one of them said, "Oh yeah, Ms. DeMore. There were more commercials for the military." "Huh, isn't that interesting?" And they said "Yeah. They're just commercials." And I said "What is the top news story this week in the country?" And all of the sudden someone said, "Oh yeah! They need more soldiers!" And I said, "Hmm. . .isn't that interesting? Why do you think there would be more commercials for the military on *American Idol*?" They said, "Oh, they're just commercials." And I said, "Let's go back. What is the average age of people who watch *American Idol*?" And the kids were like, "Huh?" "Isn't that interesting?" This was the week after the war in Iraq began.

That's why I wanted them to look and keep a journal, because it has everything to do with music, but also feels like the pulse of what was going on in our country. Also, it's all kinds of things having to do with democracy, because you vote on *American Idol*. I said to them, "So, is this, in our terms of democracy and our rules (one person, one vote), is *American Idol* really based on the premise of democracy?" They said, "Sure, you get to vote!" and I said, "But don't you get to vote as many times as you want to? You can vote ten times on the computer, ten times by phone, ten times by text." I said, "Is that really democracy?"

And then I would throw them another question, and say, "If they give you a list of 500 songs and say 'You can pick any song you want to,' is that freedom of choice?" and they'd go, "Yeah, you get to pick any song you want to." I'd say, "Let me ask you again. If they give you a list of 500 songs and say you can pick anything you want, is that freedom of choice?" And after a while, the kids are like, "Well, I guess if they write the list, then maybe they've already picked the things for you. You're just picking whatever is approved by them to pick." I said, "*bingo*."

It sounds like a combination of critical thinking and awareness about how music is used in media.

Exactly. It's completely about critical thinking. There's a whole other course under Sound Awareness where students have to bring in the lyrics of their favorite song. They have to write it in their own handwriting. And that's to talk to them about how music is imprinted on them, before they understand what it really means. If they have to sit down and write it, it makes them think more about what it is that they're writing, so that they begin to look at what it is. I'll say, "You have to give me three reasons why you like it, and 'it's got a great beat' and 'just because' are not reasons! Here's the piece of music that you really love. Does that represent who you are when you walk into the room? And how are you affected by the music that you listen to?" And a lot of them say, "I'm not affected by any of that, I'm not affected by any commercials or music videos," And I say, "Oh, I'm looking at you and you are nothing but wearing designer labels all the time." I said, "You've got to think about this."

So this is the kind of stuff we talk about. About being awake, and being aware of how the music and the words affect you. If you're not awake, you don't understand how you are being manipulated—as to what to buy, what to wear, how to speak, how to interact with your friends, you know. So to me, that's all under sound awareness.

That seems like a pretty essential thing to be teaching kids, particularly at the sixth-grade level, since it's a time when you're trying to define yourself by what you're wearing and how you can fit in, and becoming aware as to how manipulated you are by the media.

Right?

On the connection between audience and performer, and putting yourself into what you're singing:

> **"I was working with a choir, and these people were rigid. I said, 'You've got to put more of yourself into the piece.' They said, 'But we're doing Bach's B-Minor Mass.' And I said, 'Can I remind you that Bach had twenty children?'"**

I was working with a choir, and these people were rigid. I said, "You've got to put more of yourself into the piece." They said, "But we're doing Bach's B-Minor Mass." And I said, "Can I remind you that Bach had twenty children? Okay?" [laughter]

You have to realize that a human being wrote this. I had a choir say, "We don't want to get in the way of the music." "What? Then I'm going to sit by my radio at home in my drawers and eat my popcorn!" They call it a live performance for a reason. There should be this exchange, otherwise it's two-dimensional and who cares?

You have made me very, very happy to know that you are in the world. This is what we need more of right here.

It's good for you to discover why you have been given the gifts that you have been given. And we are here to manifest those gifts in a way that connects people. That's why. And folks know. They know when it's the truth and when it's not.

You can feel it.

Melanie with one of her heroes, Pete Seeger

They know! And I work with a group. I do a lot of live singing for dance companies as well. But I've been working with this group and talking about the combination of theatre and dance and music—you'll love this—it's called Skywatchers[3], in San Francisco, a spontaneous choir and open mic. Skywatchers is in the Tenderloin, which is the rough section of San Francisco. It's in the Tenderloin National Forest, which used to be an old crack alley, and now is the heart of the Tenderloin; you open up these gates and there's this beautiful thing. It's with the residents there. All of the stories are their stories. It's incredible, and it's theatre, it's dance. We lead a procession through the neighborhood. Folks who are nodding off on the sidewalk lift their heads up and start singing. But that's the thing about that connection and community and giving people a voice when they think that no one gives a shit about who they are or what they have to say or that they even have a voice! That's what Skywatchers is all about. So you'll wanna check that out.

I'll go on a YouTube binge.
(I did. Highly recommended.)

I'm really appreciative of this conversation, and very glad that you are doing the work that you are doing. *Thank you*.

Well, I really am glad that you're doing what you're doing, too.

At that point, we wrapped things up. I felt more inspired and sure of my path than I had in ages. The world is a better place because Melanie DeMore is in it. But more than that, it's a better place because the Children's Music Network, all of its inspiring members, and the world of children's music exists.

Now more than ever, we need people who are focused on connecting communities, planting the seeds of song, and helping young people cultivate the tools they'll need as they traverse the world, so that they can grow into leaders, connectors, healers, music makers, and whatever else the future requires. We need all of our collective gifts to help guide the world through this difficult time. I don't know exactly how I'll be adding to that, but I know I have to, somehow. As Melanie's song goes, "I can do that, I just don't know how yet. Show me how. . . ."

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1. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/author/lily-emerson
2. http://www.melaniedemore.com
3. http://www.abdproductions.org/about-skywatchers

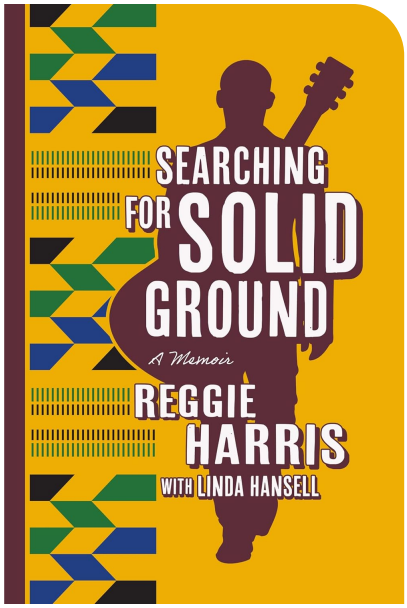
Bridge-building, Hope, and Resilience: Reggie Harris's *Searching for Solid Ground*

by Sarah Pirtle[1]

Searching for Solid Ground by Reggie Harris with Linda Hansell (Boston: Skinner House, 2024) is a five-star book. Reggie Harris starts by describing the powerful music he grew up with in his Black community—a community "that understood the nature of perseverance, that understood the nature of hope and working towards hope" as he explains in a 2021 interview with *The Bluegrass Situation*[2]. This same community spirit he then brought to schools across the country, widening into an international audience. We learn about his journey and the flame of justice he kept following.

Reggie's autobiography takes us alongside through struggles and triumphs. The magic of his writing is that we are able to ache with him, learn as he learned, cheer him on and feel him cheering us. As the book jacket summarizes, he shares "his hard-won wisdom and insights, including the challenges he faced launching a career in folk music as a Black musician, his transformative experience hearing James Baldwin speak and the beginnings of his own justice work, and a harrowing journey back to health through the gift of a liver transplant, among many other remarkable moments."

Reggie met Kim in 1974 while working at a summer camp. As a musical duo and as husband and wife, Kim and Reggie Harris were together for forty years—performing over 250 dates a year as they toured, researched, and recorded. Their lifetime achievements were celebrated by CMN through the Magic Penny Award in 2018; each received a story quilt depicting the Underground Railroad to honor their teaching of Black history. Reggie was honored twice in 2021 with the Spirit of Folk Award from Folk Alliance International and the W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Award.



Solid ground means truth-telling. We learn how Reggie experienced touring while Black and driving while Black "before the term *white privilege* was in the public consciousness." Solid ground means facing the horrific legacy of white supremacy, then leaning into potential. His video of "It's Who We Are[3]" shows person after person holding up signs saying, "We can change."

In the interview with *The Bluegrass Situation*, Reggie recounts his mentor, C.T. Vivian, saying, "We knew that we were working for something bigger than ourselves. . . . We knew that we were working in the frame of love. *For* something, not against." He connects this to his own mission: "I try to keep those messages at the forefront of my writing, at the forefront of my performing."

Reggie's song "On Solid Ground[4]" inspired the title of his book. When he sings, "We will keep each other strong," he means it. He's lived it. He takes us behind the scenes of developing Deeper Than the Skin[5] presentations with Greg Greenway. As music director and co-president of the Living Legacy Project[6], he shares his efforts to connect people to the history of the Civil Rights Movement. We feel his capacity for friendship extended to us, the readers.

When Reggie is performing, we hear his signature rhythmic guitar and see his smile as an unforgettable beacon lighting up the promised land of human connection and commitment. His book sends that beacon full force.

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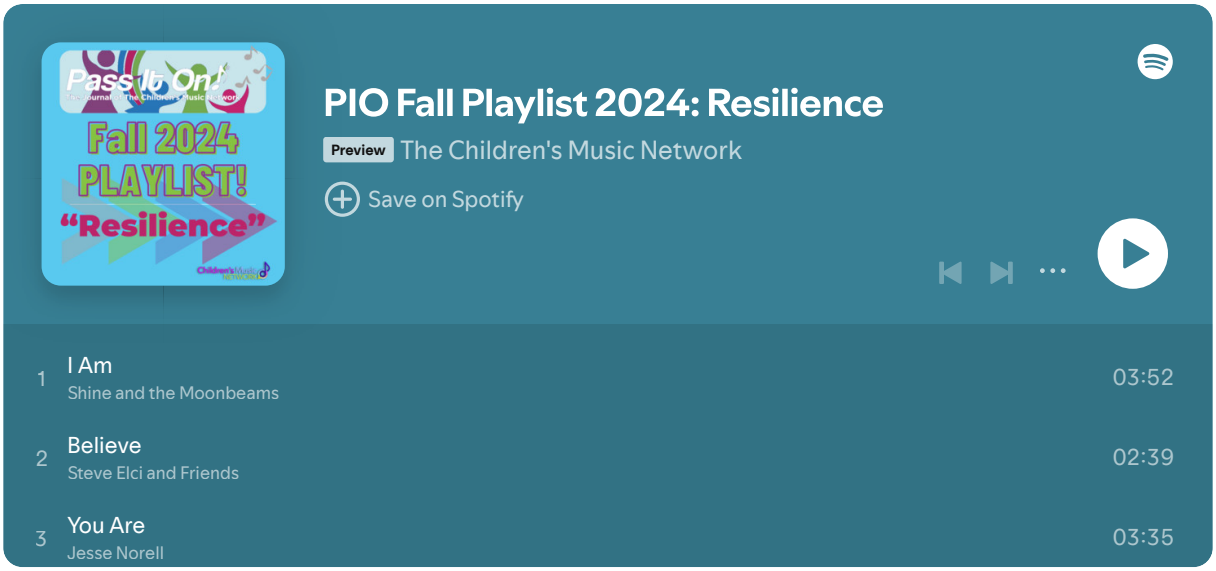
1. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/pass-it-on/author/sarah-pirtle
2. https://thebluegrasssituation.com/read/folk-hero-reggie-harris-faces-a-moment-of-reckoning-on-solid-ground
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll6S4LgjmU8
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyOb8eerHU4
5. https://reggieharrismusic.com/storyteller
6. https://www.livinglegacypilgrimage.org

Playlists: Resilience

curated by Esther Crow

In keeping with this issue’s theme, CMN members contributed songs about believing in yourself, expressing feelings, overcoming adversity, trying again and again, growing from mistakes, adapting to change, finding support, and all those things that allow us to carry on when times are tough. Enjoy this bounty of songs and videos celebrating resilience—and keep going!



Listen to this playlist on Spotify[1]

Spotify Songs

1. "I Am" – Shine and the Moonbeams
2. "Believe" – Steve Elci and Friends
3. "You Are" – Jesse Norell
4. "Jack & Jill" – Thunder and Sunshine
5. "Otra Vez" – Nathalia
6. "If You Fall" – The Fuzzy Lemons
7. "Choose Happy" – Pam Felber Ziggity Zag Music
8. "Do What Big Kids Do" – Mr. Jeff
9. "Waves" – Beppie
10. "Going Up the Slide" – In the Nick of Time
11. "Rainbow Shoppe" – Andrew & Polly, feat. Lucy Kalantari
12. "B.F.F. Goodbye" – Mista Cookie Jar & the Chocolate Chips
13. "I Am Resilient" – Miss Julieann, Joseph Pierog
14. "All Those Funny Feelings (It's Okay)" – Cee Bee Teatime
15. "Something New" – Marsha and the Positrons
16. "Shed Your Skin" – Animal Farm
17. "Little by Little" – Claudia Robin Gunn, Dean Jones
18. "Breathe" – Captain Festus McBoyle
19. "Keep on Trying" – Van Sereno
20. "What Am I to Do" – Vanessa Trien and the Jumping Monkeys
21. "Level Up" – Strawbitty Yops, Uncle Jumbo
22. "Sadness" – The Wise Channel
23. "Almost Made It" – Nanny Nikki
24. "Everyone Grows" – Lianne Bassin

Watch this playlist on YouTube[2]

YouTube Songs

1. “Yet” – Randy Sauer
2. “Miller of the Dee” – Chandrika Tandon
3. “The Problem-Solving Song” – Barb Tilsen
4. “I Am Brave” – Dana’s Music Playground
5. “The Smilers” – Kelli Welli
6. “Disco Rain” – Mil’s Trills, feat. Uncle Jumbo
7. “Bounce” – Suzanne Jamieson
8. “Unidos” – Twinkle Time, feat. MC Magic and Izzi Def
9. “We Need No Excuse for Dreaming” – Kid Pan Alley
10. “Chase the Rain” – Secret Agent 23 Skidoo
11. “Doctor” (Elizabeth Blackwell) – Jonathan Sprout

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1. https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7DYN3oACu3viW5l2hIYQXH
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSUljIKVIy0&list=PLhgbavvXInxp30dl78TFrZa4aKEkfKMbf
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=videoseries

I Am Resilient

words and music by Julieann Hartley[1], MT-BC, NTP, NMT
© 2023 Miss Julieann

How fortunate are we, in putting together this *PIO!* issue centered on Resilience, to hear from CMN member Julieann Hartley[2], whose album *Resilient Child* presents upbeat songs and research-based tools to help kids navigate life's challenges. As a music therapist, Julieann assessed the neurological effects of profound trauma on children and learned that resilience skills—such as the ability to connect, regulate, and reason—were crucial to recovery. She draws on her personal experience in overcoming the impacts of trauma, having lived through childhood abuse and a disabling neurological Lyme infection. Her songs teach kids how to express their needs and find support as well as how to give gratitude and celebrate their inner strength. She sees sustainability and nature education as key components of resilience and offers workshops on foraging wild foods.

But she doesn't stop there. As the urgent need for resilience education continues to increase among young people, Julieann decided to spread awareness by creating the Resilient Child Media Awards. In her words:

I knew that if we were going to reach every child to help them develop these resilience skills, we would need hundreds of children's musicians and content creators to be developing and utilizing similar content.

That's why I created this award. I want to drive stimulation and innovation in the kids' media world to develop the best possible resilience-based content for kids to help stop these generational trauma cycles.

My hope is that within the next few years, we will have simple connection and coping skills songs available in every style of music and in every language. I hope that educators all around the world will know about this content and be prepared to use it with their classrooms.

The Resilient Child Media Awards will honor songs, albums, and music videos released in 2024 that exemplify Resilient Child goals of furthering mental health and sustainability. The award winner will receive funding for a future project. For inspiration, look no further than last year's winner: CMN's own Fyütch and his song "I Am Love, I Am Light[3]."

Nominations for the Resilient Child Awards open in December 2024. For more information, head to missjulieann.com/resilient-child-media-awards.html[4] or follow @resilientchildmedia or @missjulieannmusic.

Sing this song with the resilient children in your life and take a look at Miss Julieann's supporting materials for ideas on how to deepen its impact.

*Juliann notes that when singing this song with a group, you can simplify it by pausing here to share information about coping skills over the chord changes, then inviting suggestions to zipper in. She demonstrates in a video here:

"I Am Resilient" video

"Coping skills are good things that help us calm down and feel better. They could be getting a hug, reading a book, going for a walk, etc. What's most important is that they help us calm our body down in a safe way. So, what are some of your coping skills?"

(Fill in the zipper verse to the same chord progression and pattern as the first verse of the song)

I am _____ (dancing, having a snack, reading, etc.),

_____ (Dancing, etc.) today,

_____ (dancing, etc.) helps melt my stress away.

Yes, I am _____ (dancing, etc.),

_____ (Dancing, etc.) today,

_____ (dancing, etc.) helps melt my stress away . . . hey!

And here are the liner notes with more suggestions and activities[7].

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1. https://www.missjulieann.com
2. https://www.missjulieann.com
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXuCvf7_ZJk
4. https://www.missjulieann.com/resilient-child-media-awards.html
5. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/media/pass-it-on/i-am-resilient/I%20Am%20Resilient%20song%20sheet.pdf
6. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/media/pass-it-on/i-am-resilient/I%20Am%20Resilient%20song%20sheet.pdf
7. https://journal.childrensmusic.org/media/pass-it-on/i-am-resilient/I Am Resilient song notes.pdf
8. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kd_r7gxbW0s

I Am Resilient

words and music by Julieann Hartley, MT-BC, NTP, NMT
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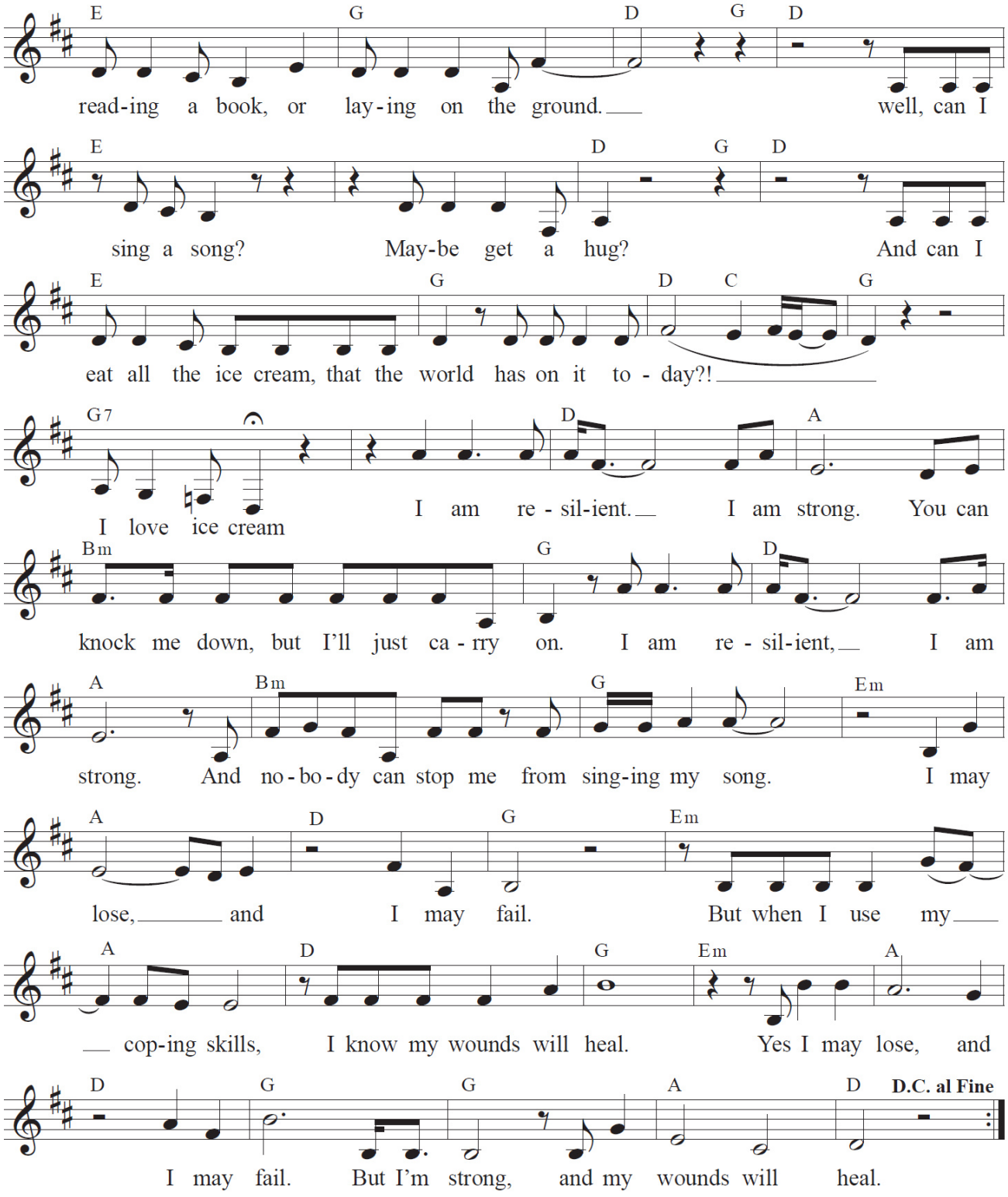
Strongly (♩ = 110)

G D A
I am re - sil - ient. I am strong. You can
Bm G
knock me down, but I'll just car - ry on. I am re -
D A Bm
sil - ient, I am strong. And no - bod - y can stop me from
G D A
sing-ing my song. So stand up, stand tall, Hold your
Bm G D
head up high through it all, When it's not, go - ing your
A Bm G Fine
way, Use your cop - ing skills to bright - en up your day. Hey!
D A Bm G D A Bm
Hey, hey!
G E G D G
Hey, Jul - ie - ann, what are cop - ing skills?
D E G
Well, they're the good things that help us calm down, Like

E G D G D
read-ing a book, or lay-ing on the ground. well, can I
E D G D
sing a song? May-be get a hug? And can I
E G D C G
eat all the ice cream, that the world has on it to - day?!
G7 D A
I love ice cream I am re - sil-ient. I am strong. You can
Bm G D
knock me down, but I'll just ca - rry on. I am re - sil-ient, I am
A Bm G Em
strong. And no - bo - dy can stop me from sing-ing my song. I may
A D G Em
lose, and I may fail. But when I use my
A D G Em A
cop-ing skills, I know my wounds will heal. Yes I may lose, and
D G G A D D.C. al Fine
I may fail. But I'm strong, and my wounds will heal.

Chorus
I am resilient. I am strong.
You can knock me down, but I'll just carry on.
I am resilient. I am strong.
And nobody can stop me from singing my song.

So stand up, stand tall,
Hold your head up high through it all,
When it's not going your way,
Use your coping skills to brighten up your day.
Hey!

Hey, hey!*

Hey, Julieann, (hey Joey!), what are coping skills?
That's a great question.
Well, they're good things that help us calm down,
Like reading a book, or laying on the ground.
Okay, well, can I sing a song?
Absolutely!
Maybe get a hug?
Yes, that's a great idea.
Can I eat all the ice cream,
That the world has on it today?! I love ice cream.

Woah, woah, Joey, wait. Your coping skill is to eat all the ice cream on the whole planet?
Yeah, that's my coping skill.
We can work with that.

Chorus

I may lose, and I may fail.
But when I use my coping skills, I know my wounds will heal.
Yet I may lose, and I may fail.
But I'm strong, and my wounds will heal.

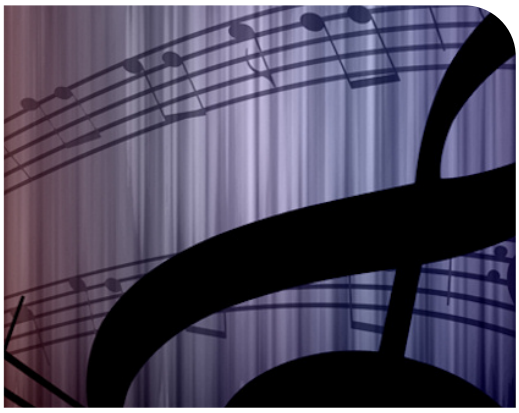
Chorus

So stand up, stand tall,
Hold your head up high through it all,
When it's not, going your way,
Use your coping skills to brighten up your day.

Hey!

About PIO!

Pass It On! publishes thoughtful, informative articles on children's music, empowering those who teach, write, perform, share, and produce it to strengthen their craft and their advocacy. All articles are open to the public, providing CMN members and the wider community with news about exciting programs, music history, business tips, and in-depth interviews with music legends. Our songs for children —serious and silly, traditional and brand new, for all ages and from all over the world—are meant to be learned and shared.



CMN members receive exclusive access to songs and to all issues of *Pass It On!* Join Now[1]

Staff

PIO! Editor

Ginger Lazarus
ginger.lazarus@gmail.com[2]

Copy Editor

Heather Taylor
blueheronimagesandwords@gmail.com[3]

Design

Kim Arden / Graphic Alchemy
kim@graphicalchemy.com[4]

Technical

Carl Foote / Soliv Design
cfoote@solivdesign.com[5]

Volunteer Staff

Playlist Coordinator

Esther Crow
estcrow@gmail.com[6]

Content Advisor

Brigid Finucane
gardengoddess1@comcast.net[7]

How to Submit Something to *Pass It On!*

Articles

Pass It On! always needs stories from members about what they're doing and how they're doing it. If you are a CMN member, you are invited to share your story. After all, that's the whole point of CMN.

Playlists

Pass It On! playlists feature songs by CMN members on Spotify and YouTube. Songs related to each issue's theme will be solicited regularly.

Interested? Read our guidelines for submission[8] to *Pass It On!*

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